



Office of Research and Development

*Press
Release*

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Study in Ohio to Look at Children's Exposure to Persistent Pollutants

Research Triangle Park, NC.....A pilot study of preschool children will begin this spring in Ohio by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Research and Development to better understand how young children may get exposed to persistent pollutants including pesticides.

Preschool children are thought to have more frequent contact with pesticides and other pollutants than older children or adults because of what they eat and drink, where they spend their time and what they do. There is concern that children may be more sensitive to the toxic effects of some chemicals found in or on lawns, carpets, toys, furniture and many other items. As a result, there is a need to know whether and how exposure may be occurring.

The three-year study, launched in North Carolina last summer, will involve about 260 children between 18 months and 5 years of age at participating day care centers and individual homes. Ohio day care centers are being sought to participate in the study. The study will be conducted in the counties of Fayette, Hamilton, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Licking, and Defiance. This is a pilot study, meaning further research on children will be needed to develop conclusions that can be applied to the population as a whole.

Children who stay at home with an adult caregiver and attend preschool or day care in the selected counties may be eligible to participate in the voluntary study. Families who enroll in the study will be asked to provide samples of food and beverages consumed by their child and the adult caregiver during a two-day period. Scientists will also collect samples of indoor and outdoor air; urine and hand wipe samples from the child and adult; and samples of dust and play area soil. The study has been endorsed by the National Head Start Association, the Ohio Department of Human Services, and several local child service agencies, including Cuyahoga's Community United Head Start & Day Care, Inc. and Franklin's Child Development Council of Franklin County, Inc.

The EPA has been directed under the Food Quality Protection Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996 to give special attention to protecting children from environmental health risks. In response, the EPA's National Exposure Research Laboratory in the Research Triangle Park, NC, is conducting research to fill in the gaps in understanding how children are exposed to environmental contaminants, what the health effects are and how to assess risks to children.

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